



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **06/12/2012 Minutes**

Park and Recreation Commission  
Minutes  
Tuesday, June 12, 2012 @ 7:00 PM  
Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:00 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, June 12, 2012.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Shirley Canniff and Don Vitters. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Karen Jalatis, Elisabeth Carr Jones, Cate Orancheck, Sue Doctrow and Melanie Wisner.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the Minutes of May 9, 2012, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 3-0.

### **Open Forum – Public Comments**

Ms. Karen Jalatis resides at 455 Summer Street. She stated her concern with foul balls being hit from Summer St. baseball field into the street, hitting cars and private property. This is a very dangerous situation. There has been a tremendous amount of damage to her car and her house; broken windows, dents in vehicles and the house, a hole in her siding. In addition, her lawn has been damaged due to ballplayers retrieving the baseballs. Ms. Jalatis said that her house alone is hit at least four times per game and that doesn't include damage to other properties and passing vehicles. She is very upset that nobody has taken responsibility and although she has never appeared in front of the Commission before, feels that in the past she has been given the run around.

Mr. Connelly stated that netting was priced out two years ago. He believes the cost was in the \$40,000 to \$50,000 range. That included 250 feet of netting along the first base and third base lines. Mr. Connelly stated that the problem has been acknowledged, but that the solutions have raised concerns with some neighbors. This is a capital expense. Mr. Connelly stated that he would request money from the Capital Planning Committee. The request would be made in November and will go to Town Meeting next April, if Town Meeting votes yes; money should be received on July 1, 2013. Mr. Connelly also stated that we could use some feasibility study money and look into various netting options.

Ms. Caniff feels that the baseball teams should be informed to stay off private property, starting immediately. Mr. Connelly also stated that he would look into other fields for Fall Ball games.

Ms. Mayer stated that, while the Commission was aware that foul balls were a problem at this field, they certainly were not aware of the frequency and severity of the problem and agrees that it should be addressed ASAP. This will be a priority on the Capital Plan.

### **Robbins Farm Community Garden Update**

Elizabeth Carr-Jones, Sue Doctrow and Melanie Wisner all stated that they are grateful to garden in the park. The garden is a great community experience and membership has expanded. The gardeners have made connections with local groups, and there is a continued online outreach. They are extremely happy with the current garden, including size and ability to overwinter. The Commission expressed its appreciation for all the work of the gardeners and the cooperative nature of the effort. Feedback from all was nothing but positive.

### **Peirce Elementary School Park and Recreation Facility Review**

Ms. Cate Oranchak talked in detail about the ways to improve the quality of grounds at the Peirce School Playgrounds. Some of the urgent issues are as follows:

- Erosion at the back of the gymnasium. Hill erosion washes down on the basketball court playing surface. Erosion also is the grassy play area, which could benefit from irrigation or artificial turf.
- Steep hill on Summer St. and Newland Rd. sides make adult supervision/sightlines challenging.
- Bench area is unsightly.
- Lawn is worn at the pedestrian gate.

The biggest complaint is the erosion behind the gym. Ms. Oranchak presented possible improvements with the most likely being the construction of a retaining wall to hold back the slope. Mr. Connelly will meet with DPW on the issues, in addition to getting some pricing. Ms. Oranchak will provide Mr. Connelly with more detail. Mr. Connelly will set up a meeting within the next couple of weeks. The Commission supports the efforts to correct the erosion issues identified.

### **Arlington Men's Softball Field Use Review**

The Arlington Men's Softball League was run by the Recreation Department four years ago. Since then, Ben Wall has been running it. There have been complaints about the behavior of the league, which plays at Buzzell and Hurd fields.

Issues that have come to the attention of the Commission include drinking alcohol at the fields, badmouthing and threatening DPW staff and neighbors, excessive littering of water bottles/beer cans/plastic cups, parking in restricted areas, posting alcohol related pictures on their website and repeated violations of the lights 10pm lights out/15 minute premises vacated policy.

Ms. Mayer stated that she is appalled by the recent behavior and that it has escalated this year. Ms. Mayer feels that the Arlington Men's Softball organization, as a group, owes the Asst. Director of DPW a written apology for posting her address and the comments made, and the league needs to come into compliance with all by-laws and policies of the Town. If the league has concerns about policies and/or field conditions then there are appropriate ways to address them. Representatives of the league are always welcome to bring their concerns to a Park & Rec Commission meeting.

Ben Wall stated that he is embarrassed by the behavior and feels that the guys are frustrated due to cancelled games. Mr. Wall will be addressing each team face-to-face and will make sure that the fields are in order. He said he would put a halt to the behavior.

Mr. Connelly will put together a letter to the league summarizing the conversation of the meeting. Ms. Mayer requested that Mr. Connelly be given rosters with names and emails for direct communication with members of the league. Submission of rosters is a requirement of the Field Use Policy for a league to be given a permit.

### **Capital Improvement Update**

**Wellington Tennis Courts** – Mr. Connelly stated that crushed stone was put in the area where the grass was not growing due to poor drainage and that the patch on court number one needs to be re-colored.

**North Union Basketball Court** – No report.

**2013 Capital Request Review – No report.**

**Reservoir Boat Ramp – No report.**

**Buck Field Renovation** – Mr. Connelly stated that the light shields are up. Youth Baseball is waiting for the outfield netting, however the poles are up. There is no money for the scoreboard.

**Poets Corner Master Plan – No report.**

**Menotomy Rocks Park** – Sacca will do the pond step repair work. The electrical line in the pond is eroded. New picnic tables will be installed.

**Spy Pond Pathway** – There is still work to do. Rain garden is looking better. The signage that has been put up should be taken down. All signage needs to be approved. Mr. Connelly will notify the rain garden group.

**Rink Phase 3** – The project was bid out for mechanical work and supplies have been ordered. Construction schedule shows a completion date of August 4<sup>th</sup>. They will be updating the dehumidifier system and replacing the cooling tower.

**Off Leash Dog Review Review**

No off-leash complaints were received this month.

The Thorndike OLRA opened May 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Connelly stated that there are some quirks but people love the area and it is getting a lot of use. People are going in after closing and leaving a mess. Mr. Connelly mentioned possibly locking the gates. Mr. Connelly and the Commission view this as a last resort. It was recommended that the gates be locked temporarily to send the message that the OLRA does have a closing time that is enforced.

The gates are not self-closing and are not offset, which is a problem because gates are being left open and unleashed dogs can get out. Mr. Connelly will talk to the fencing company about installing self-closing mechanisms. Having separate entrance and exit gate designations helps some with the issue.

The area around the tree has become a problem with dogs jumping over/walking under the benches and playing/digging. There is no longer any mulch in the area and the tree is not well protected. Additional mulch will be added until a long-term fix can be determined.

There are a couple of problems with the pathway that results in an inability to keep the peastone off the path. 1) The StaLok material did not set up as expected and is more like stone dust. Mr. Connelly will meet with Leonard, Sacca and the manufacturer's representative to determine the problem and possible solutions. 2) There is no edging to define the pathway. One option would be to temporarily put aluminum edging around the pathway until next fiscal year. Ms. Mayer is opposed to this option, as she feels that aluminum could break into sharp edges, which would hurt the dogs. Other alternatives will be investigated.

There was a complaint about too much signage. Current signage is temporary and is needed to help emphasize certain rules and curb behavior that has been noted to be a problem. The right level of permanent signage will be determined over the next few months.

**Special Requests**

Community Education is requesting Robbins Farm for a boot camp on Monday and Wednesdays nights from 6:00 to 7:00 PM from September to early November. Ms. Canniff motioned to approve, Mr. Vitters seconded and approved 3-0.

There was a request from Dan Shine regarding availability of Hurd Field in the fall for girls' field hockey. The Commission agreed to allow this on a one season pilot basis. Mr. Vitters motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Canniff, approved 3-0.

Ted Dever has requested the rink on 12/26 and 12/28 for a new Ed Burns Tournament. Participants will include Medford, Somerville and Waltham. Since its inception the tournament has included AHS, AC, Billerica and Reading, alternating locations and hosting duties. This year the Ed Burns Tournament is already scheduled to be held in Arlington during those dates and hosted by AC. Any change to participants and/or format would have to take place in a future year, when AHS is scheduled to host.

### **Rink and Recreation Update**

The Rink budget is currently in the red \$5,000 due to approximately \$30,000 in unexpected improvements (zamboni issue and dehumidifier).

Mr. Connelly will know how the Recreation budget is doing within the next few weeks. As always, Reservoir revenues will be a key component and the warm weather has been helpful.

Registrations for the new afterschool program (Kid Care) are going well. The open house was well attended, and transportation from the schools to the program will be provided by North Reading Transport.

### **Committee Updates:**

**Portable Restrooms – N/A**

**Friends of Parks – N/A**

**Skateboard Park** – There is a potential large donor if the town is willing to match it.

**Mill Brook Linear Park – N/A**

### **Other Business**

Mr. Vitters motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Mayer and approved 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation